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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Afghanistan, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, San Marino, South Africa, Turkey, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe: draft resolution

The girl child

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/106 of 12 December 1997 and all previous relevant resolutions,

Also recalling the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women,[1] the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[2] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[3] the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993,[4] the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s of the

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[2] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[3] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[4] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

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World Summit for Children, held in New York on 29 and 30 September 1990,[5] the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs adopted at the World Conference on Education for All,[6] the Declaration and Agenda for Action of the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held at Stockholm from 27 to 31 August 1996,[7] and the conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by the Commission at its forty-second session,[8] in particular those relating to the girl child,

Deeply concerned about discrimination against the girl child and the violation of the rights of the girl child, which often result in less access for girls to education, nutrition, physical and mental health care and in girls enjoying fewer of the rights, opportunities and benefits of childhood and adolescence than boys and often being subjected to various forms of cultural, social, sexual and economic exploitation and to violence and harmful practices such as incest, early marriage, female infanticide, prenatal sex selection and female genital mutilation,

Deeply concerned also that girls, in particular adolescent girls, continue to be silent and invisible victims of violence, abuse and exploitation and that some legal systems do not address adequately the vulnerability of girls in the administration of justice, including the need for better protection of child victims and witnesses,

Stressing that discrimination and neglect of the girl child can initiate a lifelong downward spiral of deprivation and exclusion from the social mainstream,

Deeply concerned that in situations of poverty, war and armed conflict, girl children are among the victims most affected and that thus their potential for full development is limited,

Concerned that the girl child has furthermore become a victim of sexually transmitted diseases and the human immunodeficiency virus, which affects the quality of her life and leaves her open to further discrimination,

Reaffirming the equal rights of women and men as enshrined, *inter alia,* in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[9] and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[10]

1. *Stresses* the need for full and urgent implementation of the rights of the girl child as guaranteed to her under all human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the need for universal ratification;

2. *Urges* all States to take all necessary measures and to institute legal reforms to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, to take effective action against violations of those rights and freedoms and to base programmes and policies for the girl child on the rights of the child;

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[5] A/45/625, annex.

[6] *Final Report of the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, Thailand, 5–9 March 1990*, Inter-Agency Commission (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank) for the World Conference on Education for All, New York, 1990, appendices I and II.

[7] A/51/385, annex.

[8] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 7* (E/1998/27), chap. I, sect. B.IV.

[9] Resolution 34/180, annex.

[10] Resolution 44/25, annex.

3. *Urges* States to base programmes and policies for the girl child on the rights of the child, the responsibilities, rights and duties of the parents and the evolving capacity of the girl child, in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

4. *Also urges* States to prepare programmes for the girl child as part of their national action plans in order to implement fully the Beijing Platform for Action;

5. *Urges* all States to enact and enforce legislation protecting girls from all forms of violence, including female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, female genital mutilation, rape, domestic violence, incest, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child prostitution and child pornography, and to develop age-appropriate safe and confidential programmes and medical, social and psychological support services to assist girls who are subjected to violence;

6. *Calls upon* all States and international and non-governmental organizations, individually and collectively:

(a) To set goals and to develop and implement gender-sensitive strategies to address the rights and needs of children, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to take into account the rights and particular needs of the girl child, especially in education, health and nutrition, and to eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against the girl child;

(b) To take measures to ensure the non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of the girl child with disabilities;

(c) To generate social support for the enforcement of laws on the minimum legal age for marriage, in particular by providing educational opportunities for girls;

(d) To give attention to the rights and needs of adolescent girls, which call for special action for their protection from sexual and economic exploitation and abuse, harmful traditional and cultural practices, teenage pregnancy and vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and for the development of life skills and self-esteem, reaffirming that the advancement and empowerment of women throughout the life cycle must begin with the girl child at all ages;

(e) To review teaching materials, including textbooks, to promote the self-esteem of women and girls through positive self-images and to revise these materials, highlighting women's effective role in society, including in decision-making, development, culture, history, sports and other social, political and economic endeavours;

(f) To take measures to increase awareness of the potential of the girl child and to promote gender-sensitive socialization of boys and girls from early childhood, with the aim of achieving gender equality, development and peace within the family and the community;

(g) To ensure the equal participation of girls and young women on the basis of non-discrimination and as partners with boys and young men in social, economic and political life and the development of strategies and the implementation of action aimed at achieving gender equality, development and peace;

(h) To strengthen and reorient health education and health services, in particular primary health-care programmes, including in sexual and reproductive health, and to design quality health programmes that meet the physical and mental needs of girls and attend to the needs of young expectant and nursing mothers;

(i) To make information and counselling widely available to adolescent girls and boys, especially on human relationships, reproductive and sexual heath, sexually transmitted diseases and adolescent pregnancy, in a manner that is confidential and easily accessible, and to emphasize the equal responsibility of girls and boys;

(j) To provide adequate infrastructure and support services to respond to the needs of the survivors of violence against women and girls and to assist them towards full recovery and reintegration into society;

(k) To provide gender-sensitive training for personnel in the administration of justice, law enforcement agencies, security, social and health-care services, schools and migration authorities and to develop guidelines to ensure appropriate police and prosecutorial responses in cases of violence against women and girls;

7. *Urges* States to enact and strictly enforce laws to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses, to enact and strictly enforce laws concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage and to raise the minimum age for marriage where necessary;

8. *Also urges* States to eliminate all barriers so as to enable girls, without exception, to develop their full potential and skills through equal access to education and training;

9. *Urges* States, educational institutions and the United Nations system to provide gender-sensitive training for school administrators, parents and all members of the school community;

10. *Encourages* States to consider ways and means to ensure the continuing education and training of married women, pregnant women and young mothers and to protect them from discrimination;

11. *Urges* States to take special measures for the protection of children, in particular to protect girls from rape and other forms of sexual abuse and gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict, paying special attention to refugee and displaced girls and taking into account the special needs of the girl child in the delivery of humanitarian assistance;

12. *Urges* States parties to fulfil the obligations they have undertaken under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to protect women and girls from all forms of violence, including domestic violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking and child prostitution;

13. *Urges* States to formulate comprehensive, multidisciplinary and coordinated national plans, programmes or strategies, which should be widely disseminated, to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and provide targets and timetables for implementation and effective domestic enforcement procedures through monitoring mechanisms, involving all parties concerned, including consultations with women's organizations;

14. *Also urges* States to implement measures to protect women and girls from all forms of violence, in line with the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences;

15. *Requests* all States to implement, on an urgent basis, measures to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation, including measures in line with those outlined in the Declaration and Agenda for Action of the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children;[7]

16. *Calls upon* Governments, civil society, including the media, and non-governmental organizations to promote human rights education and the full respect for and enjoyment of the human rights of the girl child, *inter alia*, through the translation, production and dissemination of age-appropriate information materials on these rights to all sectors of society, and in particular to children;

17. *Calls upon* Governments to encourage efforts by civil society and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, to establish community-based groups or local committees that could assist with the safety and welfare of children;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to ensure that all organizations and bodies of the United Nations system individually and collectively, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the World Health Organization and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, take into account the rights and the particular needs of the girl child, especially in education, health and nutrition, and eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against the girl child in the implementation of the outcomes of all recent global conferences, in particular the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996–2001;[11]

19. *Calls upon* the Commission on Human Rights, when considering the human rights of women, in particular those relating to economic resources, to pay particular attention to all the human rights of the girl child;

20. Requests all human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and other human rights mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to regularly and systematically adopt a gender perspective in the implementation of their mandates and to include in their reports information on the qualitative analysis of violations of human rights of women and girls, and encourages the strengthening of cooperation and coordination in that regard;

21. *Calls upon* States and international and non-governmental organizations to mobilize all necessary resources, support and efforts to realize the goals, strategic objectives and actions set out in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

22. *Also calls upon* States and international and non-governmental organizations to implement fully, as appropriate, the conclusions on the girl child adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session.

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[11] E/1993/43, annex.